Introduction to Researching Topics in Music
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Objective

Statement:
Students engaged in undergraduate study in music performance at the Lynn University Conservatory of Music will learn how to gather information from reputable resources for research purposes using the library’s resources. They will then learn how to list these resources in a bibliography in accordance with Chicago writing style. This lesson will help them research the backgrounds of composers, performers, and performance literature as they learn to create artist statements, concert programs, and liner notes.

Learning Outcomes:
- Undergraduate music students will be able to distinguish the difference between reputable and disreputable information sources dealing with music history, literature, and pedagogy by the end of this lesson
- Undergraduate music students will be able to employ the use of library resources when searching for information by using the databases found on the library’s website
- Undergraduate music students will be able to develop search strategies and narrow search results while using library resources for research
- Undergraduate music students will be able to generate a list of references in Chicago format using either A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations by Kate L. Turabian or “Chicago Manual of Style 17th Edition” by Purdue Online Writing Lab
- Undergraduate music students will be able to describe what an annotated bibliography is and explain why annotated bibliographies are useful to researchers by the end of this lesson

Introduction

Writing Activity:
- Ask each student to take out a piece of paper and a writing utensil
- Instruct each student to write the name of his/her primary instrument at the top of the page
- Next, have each student write one thing he/she has learned about the construction or mechanics of his/her instrument just below the instrument’s name
- Then, have each student write the name of a well known composer for his/her instrument about a quarter of the way down the page
• Just below the name of the composer, have each student write one thing he/she has learned about that composer
• About halfway down the page, have each student write the name of a well-known piece of solo literature written for his/her instrument
• Below the title, have each student write one thing he/she has learned about that piece of music (make sure that students don’t simply write something that would ordinarily be found in the music itself such as the name of the composer or the key it’s written in; it should be a substantive statement about the piece of music)
• Next, have each student write the name of a well-known performer of his/her instrument about three quarters of the way down the page
• Finally, have each student write one thing he/she has learned about that performer below the performer’s name
• Have the students save what they’ve written as it will be used later

Explaining the Objective:
• Acknowledge that each student already has a deep level of understanding about his/her instrument which has been demonstrated by the fact that each of them has auditioned and was successfully admitted into the Lynn University Conservatory of Music
• Remind them, however, that just because they are well-adept in the understanding of their instruments, that does not mean they are authorities on the subject yet
• Explain to them that this workshop is meant to teach them how to research and discover information about topics in music, and how to tell the difference between reputable and disreputable sources of information
• Give students examples of when they would use this skillset in their chosen profession such as giving artist statements, or writing concert programs and liner notes
• Also, bring to the forefront that regardless of the fact that they are music performance majors, they may one day decide to do something else with their music degrees such as continue their education or begin teaching as this skillset would prepare them for opportunities outside of music performance
• For the time being, though, explain that this skillset is also applicable to the writing assignments that they will encounter as they continue their studies

Relate to Prior Knowledge:
• Ask students to look again at the information they’ve written about their instruments
• Ask a few students to share what they’ve written (use your judgement as to how many)
• Ask students to think about where they learned the information about their instruments
• For example: Was it something they learned through their own experience while practicing and performing? Was it something they learned from one of their teachers or private instructors? Was it something they read somewhere? How do they know the information is accurate? Is it fact or interpretation? Is it truth or assumption?
• Have students save what they’ve written as it will be used again later
Present the Content

Knowledge and Skills for the Lesson:
These students may have a depth of knowledge in regards to their own instruments; however, they do not yet possess the skills to find reputable sources of information which may corroborate what they know about their instruments. This lesson will focus on introducing these students to various resources and materials found in the library, and will help them construct search strategies in order to find information supporting what they’ve written. Finally, this lesson will instruct them on how to cite this information and construct an annotated bibliography in accordance with Chicago writing format.

Learning Activities:
• The teacher proceeds with a powerpoint presentation which includes explanations and examples for differentiating between reputable and disreputable sources of information, examples of library resources which can be used for researching topics in music, strategies for narrowing search results and creating search terms to find specific information, and guides for citing information and creating bibliographies in Chicago format
• As the teacher progresses from slide to slide, each of which gives information on how to utilize specific resources, the students will be given time to explore each resource on their own by using them to find information corroborating what they’ve written about their instruments
• During this time, the teacher will wander the classroom to observe how the students are utilizing the resources, make note of how they’ve internalized and applied the information given to them, and assist students who are experiencing difficulties in using the resource
• Also, instruct the students to open the sources of information by right-clicking the link and selecting open in new tab should they discover any sources that corroborate with the information they’ve written about their instruments
• Be sure to explain that they should keep these tabs open as they will need them for later
• After all of the library resources mentioned in the presentation have been explored, proceed with the part of the presentation that explains citations and bibliographies
• Next, guide the students to the listed online resources that will help them create their bibliographies
• Allow the students to explore these resources and familiarize themselves with the Chicago format for writing bibliographies
• For those students who found information corroborating what they’ve written about their instruments (every student should have found at least one corroborating source of information at this point), have them create a reference note in the space left below the information they’ve listed and note why this source is a reliable source of information

Activity Organization:
• This lesson begins with students creating a sheet of information about their respective instruments and reflect on how they acquired this information
• This lesson is supported by a powerpoint presentation and includes internet resources
• This lesson provides a foundation for students to begin exercising research skills
This lesson ends with students adding a reference note(s) to the information sheets created at the beginning of the lesson which provides a resource supporting the information they’ve written about their instruments.

Practice and Feedback

Continued Practice:

- Have students select a partner with whom to trade instrument information sheets
- These students then review what their partners have written and determine whether or not the reference note(s) is complete, formatted correctly, and include an annotation explaining why the chosen source is a reputable source for information
- Students will then make notes on how to correct any mistakes should any corrections be needed
- If a student has been paired with another student who was unable to find any reputable sources of information, then both students should work together in trying to find at least one reputable source and create a reference note and annotation for that source
- Have a few students share the resource(s) they’ve found with the class and explain how they found it (use your judgement as to how many)

Feedback:

The teacher should be prepared to offer feedback to the students about what he/she has observed while roaming the classroom during various parts of the lesson. The teacher should also be prepared to give constructive criticism on how students can improve their search strategies based upon the results of the various activities. Students should also be given an opportunity to ask questions about parts of the lesson, and the teacher should address any concerns that the students may have.

Summary

The teacher begins with asking students to list knowledge they already possess about their primary performance instruments. Then, students are asked to reflect upon how they acquired this knowledge, if the information is accurate, and if the source of the information is reputable. The lesson progresses with a presentation introducing various resources and search strategies, and allows time for students to explore these resources by searching for sources of information that support the knowledge they’ve recorded on their instrument information sheets. Next, the lesson offers resources that guide students in the creation of an annotated bibliography. Students then apply this information by creating a reference note for at least one piece of information listed on their instrument information sheets, and adding an annotation explaining why the chosen source is a reputable source of information. Students, then, split into pairs in order to engage in peer review of their references and annotations, or execute additional searches in order to find sources to support the information listed in their instrument information sheets. Students will be asked to share the sources they’ve found and how they found those sources. Finally, the
teacher will provide feedback and constructive criticism about the activities which took place, and the teacher will address any questions or concerns that students may have.

Assess Student Learning

Procedure:
In order to evaluate and assess the students’ understanding of the lesson objectives, students are required to create an annotated bibliography. The successful creation of an annotated bibliography will demonstrate the ability to utilize and employ the search methods outlined in the lesson, justify the resources included by showing how they are reputable sources of information, and create a list of references in accordance with Chicago writing style. Students are required to include ten resources focusing on the history, literature, or pedagogy of the students’ primary performance instruments. The annotated bibliography should include three books, three articles from peer-reviewed journals, two articles from trade journals or magazines, and two web articles. Students have one week to complete this assignment. An example has been provided below.

Example:

This text deals with the performance practice, mechanics, and applications of four mallet grips employed by percussionists. The author holds a master’s degree in music history and literature, the text itself is supported by a comprehensive bibliography, and it was published by the Percussive Arts Society which is the world’s largest percussion organization and is considered the central source for information and networking for percussionists and drummers.

Rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent (90-100)</th>
<th>Good (80-89)</th>
<th>Fair (70-79)</th>
<th>Poor (60-69)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has 10 resources as outlined in the instructions</td>
<td>Has 10 resources but not as outlined in the instructions</td>
<td>Has less than 10 but more than 6 resources, and has at least 1 of each type of resource</td>
<td>Has less than 10 but more than 6 resources, and does not have at least 1 of each type of resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each resource has complete information and is listed in bibliographic format according to Chicago writing style</td>
<td>More than 2 resources have incomplete information or are not in bibliographic format according to Chicago writing style</td>
<td>More than 2 resources have incomplete information or are not in bibliographic format according to Chicago writing style</td>
<td>More than 3 resources have incomplete information or are not in bibliographic format according to Chicago writing style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each annotation explains how the resource is related to the student’s primary instrument, notes the credentials and/or merit of the author and/or publisher,</td>
<td>Annotations note how the resources are related to the student’s primary instrument and mentions the</td>
<td>Annotations note how the resources are related to the student’s primary instrument and mentions the</td>
<td>Annotations note how the resources are related to the student’s primary instrument and mentions the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and makes mention of any other important information that would justify using the resource

| credentials and merit of the author and publisher, but they do a poor job in justifying how it’s a reputable resource |
| credentials and merit of the author and publisher, but they do a poor job in justifying how it’s a reputable resource |
| credentials and merit of the author and publisher, but they do a poor job in justifying how it’s a reputable resource |

Accommodations

Disability Access:
Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Students with Disabilities Services (SDS) in order to receive academic accommodations. SDS encourages students to notify instructors of accommodation needs at least five business days prior to needing the accommodation. A letter from SDS must accompany this request.

Religious Observance:
All students have a right to expect that the University will reasonably accommodate their religious observances, practices and beliefs. Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the term.

Writing Center:
The Writing Center is a free resource for Lynn University undergraduate and graduate students. At the Writing Center, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you, at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required.

Resources and Materials

For this lesson to be successful, the following is needed:
- A room able to facilitate the number of students expected to attend
- A large display at the front of the room (i.e. a projector and screen, or SMART board)
- A media station complete with a computer with Microsoft PowerPoint installed connected to the display
- Enough computers for each student to use
- A reliable internet connection

For this lesson to be successful, students will need:
- A writing utensil
- At least one sheet of paper